



04/17-(6)

Anton Rubinstein (1829-1894)
Orchestral Works
 Don Quixote op. 87
 Ballet Music from *The Demon*
 Violoncello Concerto
 Symphony No. 2
 Ouverture triomphale op. 43
 Valse caprice, Trot de Cavalerie
 Sérénade Russe No. 1 op. 93

Alban Gerhardt, violoncello
 Sinfonieorchester Wuppertal
 George Hanson, dir.

2 CDs at the price of 1

MDG 335 2016-2

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Absolute Virtuosity

Anton Rubinstein was a celebrated piano virtuoso, sought-after conductor, and – on the side – one of the most successful composers of his times. His Symphony No. 2, the “Ocean Symphony,” experienced more than two hundred performances when it was first written, statistics matched by hardly any other work. MDG is now rereleasing this symphony and other top-quality compositions by this Russian romanticist from the rich repertoire of its many years of extremely successful cooperation with the Wuppertal Symphony Orchestra. Alban Gerhardt, largely unknown at the time, created a tremendous sensation with Rubinstein’s Cello Concerto.

Cosmopolitan Demiurge

As a traveling virtuoso Rubinstein was of course very much in touch with his times and sometimes even ahead of them. His Cello Concerto is in fact the first Russian contribution to this genre, and he was also the first Russian composer to write a symphony. This cosmopolitan master did not hesitate to dialogue with foreign cultures – a fact reflected in the Oriental echoes in *The Demon* and in the bleating flock of sheep in *Don Quixote*.

Volcanic Activity

Rubinstein apparently also saw no reason to be stingy with grand gestures. The “Ouverture triomphale” does perfect justice to its name with piccolos, the bass drum, and other explosive forces from the percussion section. Such great emotional energy makes it very easy to understand why it was that his audiences always regarded his concerts as the musical equivalent of volcanic activity and then went home just as completely exhausted as the pianist himself.

Symphonic Dramaturge

The Wuppertal Symphony absolutely has what it takes when it comes to unleashing such energy on the concert stage. George Hanson gives his musicians free rein, and the legendary acoustics of Wuppertal’s Historische Stadhalle am Johannisberg do their part to overpower music fans with original musicality even in their own living rooms – bravi, bravissimi!

